

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Previously presented) A process for forming a preform having a first portion and a second portion at an angle to the first portion, the first portion being curved, the process comprising the steps of:

folding the first portion onto the second portion;

providing a stretchable preform fabricated from bundled fibers for permitting the first portion to be curved without crumples;

stretching the first portion;

unfolding the first portion off of the second portion; and

forming the first portion into a curved without crumples.

2. (Original) The process as set forth in claim 1 wherein the preform is made of woven material.

3. (previously presented) The process as set forth in claim 2 wherein the step of providing an expandable preform includes the step of forming the preform with discontinuous threads.

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The process as set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of stretching is accomplished in a sine wave shaped die.

6. (previously presented) The process of claim 1 wherein the preform is a 3D woven PI shaped cross-section preform having first and second foot portions and first and second upstanding leg portions for use in a structure having at least one curved portion.

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) The process of claim 3 wherein the discontinuous threads are in rows parallel to the direction of curvature over length equal to the length

requiring curvature, such that the gaps between each thread row are spaced from the gaps in the adjacent thread rows.

13. (previously presented) The process of Claim 5 wherein the sine wave shaped die is tapered.

14. (currently amended) A process for forming a preform having a curved portion ~~in a plane~~, the curved portion having a progressively increasing radius from a first edge to a second edge, the process comprising the steps of:

providing a stretchable preform fabricated from bundled fibers;

stretching the preform with mating dies for progressively expanding the preform from the first edge to the second edge; and

after the stretching step, shaping the preform ~~perform~~ into a substantially flat curved configuration without crumples to form the curved portion.

15. (previously presented) The process of Claim 14 wherein the curved portion is a foot portion of the preform.

16. (previously presented) The process of Claim 14 wherein the curved portion is a leg portion of the preform.

17. (previously presented) The process of Claim 14 wherein the fibers of the bundled fibers are discontinuous.

18. (previously presented) The process of Claim 14 wherein the mating dies define molding surfaces having a tapered sine wave configuration.

19. (previously presented) The process of Claim 18 wherein the stretching step comprises the steps of:

disposing the preform between the mating tapered sine wave dies;

aligning the inner radius to a small amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies;

aligning the outer radius to a large amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies; and

closing the mating tapered sine wave dies onto the preform.

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20. (currently amended) The process of Claim 14 wherein the shaping step comprises the step of expanding the stretched preform about a die surface of a second die having a final desired shape of the preform.